

A further record of the spider *Microctenonyx subitaneus* (Araneae: Linyphiidae: Erigoninae) in Australia

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Linyphiids are tiny to medium spiders (1 to 8 mm in body length) that construct sheet webs. Members of the subfamily Erigoninae are smallest (1 to 4 mm). They construct tiny sheet webs under stones, in moss or depressions in the soil (Main 1976; Raven *et al.* 2002a). Despite comprising a large proportion of the European fauna, linyphiids represent only a small proportion of described Australian taxa. The Australian fauna comprises 20 genera and 35 described species (Raven *et al.* 2002b). Five introduced species have been recorded; *Diplocephalus cristatus* (Blackwall), *Eperigone fradeorum* (Berland), *Erigone prominens* Bösenberg and Strand, *Microctenonyx subitaneus* (O.P. Cambridge), and *Ostearius melanopygius* (O.P. Cambridge) (Austin *et al.* 1991; Hirst and Nicolson 1995; Raven *et al.* 2002c).

Here *Microctenonyx subitaneus*, from the Erigoninae, is recorded as an additional genus and species present in Western Australia. This finding supports the previous South Australian record by Hirst and Nicolson (1995). Although *M. subitaneus* is endemic to the holarctic (Platnick 2003), it is known from other regions including Africa and New Zealand (Millidge 1988; Scharff 1990). This widespread occurrence has led to many synonyms being created; seven junior synonyms are known (see Platnick 2003).

Specimen identification was by a match of the male palps to Figures 308 and 310 in Millidge (1988). A dorsal view of the carapace, with prominent sulci (pits) behind the posterior lateral eyes, also matched his Figure 309. Lateral view of the carapace, however, revealed a difference to his Figure 301. Rather than all eyes being located on the anterior surface of the carapace, the posterior median eyes were on the dorsal surface. It is unknown whether this represents an abnormal specimen, some plasticity in eye location, or mechanical damage to the specimen during collection.

Further collecting and/or searches of museum collections might reveal other Australian specimens of *M. subitaneus*. It is likely the specimen detailed here was from an established population rather than an immigrant intercepted at its point of entry.

The latter are found usually in urban areas, particularly shipping ports or areas where goods imported from abroad have been stored (e.g., Harvey 1996). This specimen was collected from a rehabilitated mine pit, surrounded by unmined jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) forest, 45 km south-east of Perth. That said, the species appears difficult to collect at this locality. Of more than 25,000 spiders identified from Jarrahdale Mine, Western Australia, it is the only known specimen.

It is likely that other described linyphiids will be found in Australia. Raven *et al.* (2002c) suggest *Tenuiphantes cristatus* (Menge), may be present although not yet recorded.

MATERIAL EXAMINED

Australia: Western Australia: 1 male, Jarrahdale Mine 32°16'S 116°06'E, vacuum sampled from foliage, 8 year-old rehabilitated mine pit surrounded by jarrah forest, October 1997, K.E.C. Brennan (Western Australian Museum specimen number T54593).

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